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The political impact of self-criticism conducted through the newspapers cannot be evaluated entirely on the basis of the preceding description. "Self-criticism" operates within carefully defined limits which considerably restrict its potential influence as a democratic force. The press is not allowed to criticize indiscriminately. In its decision on April 22, 1950, the Central-Committee of the Communist Party cautioned that it was necessary for the press to distinguish "between true and constructive criticism on the one hand and destructive criticism on the other." By "destructive criticism" the Communists meant any criticism which is aimed at repudiating the "people's democratic dictatorship," opposing the "Common Program," destroying social discipline, shaking people's faith in leadership, and "causing pessimism and disunity among the masses." This means that no criticism can be directed against any basic policy established by the Communist regime. Nor is it permissible for the press to make any open criticism of the top leaders or of the regime itself. What the press can do is to criticize officials on a lower echelon of corruption, disloyalty, or delinquency in the exectuion of policies of the regime. Viewed in this context, it is clear that the press as an instrument of public control is not only relatively harmless to the existing regime but is actually designed and operated to support it.

Radio as a Propaganda and Public Information Medium Radio, as another medium of propaganda and public information used by the Communists in

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Central-South China, should be briefly mentioned. Like the press, the radio has been recognized by the Communists as a powerful weapon of political propaganda and education. But when they assumed control of the Central-South Region, the Communists found very few radio broadcasting facilities which could be used. They took immediate steps to set up broadcasting stations in Honan and Kwangsi. The latest statistics on radio broadcasting facilities in the region are not available. As of June 1951, the following stations were in operation.

RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS IN CENTRAL-SOUTH CHINA
(June 1951)

| Classification | Location | Wave Length (Kilocycles) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Regional Broadcasting Station | Wuhan | 700, 6645, and 7275 |
| 5 Provincial Broadcasting Stations | Honan | * |
| | Kiangsi | - |
| | Hunan | - |
| | Kwangtung | - |
| | Kwangsi | - |
| 5 Municipal Broadcasting Stations | Wuhan | 1150 |
| | Canton | 913, 1203 and 1703 |
| | Kaifeng | - |
| | Changsha | - |
| | Nanchang | - |

* Not available.

Source: Chung-nan Kuang-po [Central-South Broadcasting Journal], Vol. II, No. 2, June 1, 1951, pp. 5-6.

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In line with the general practice in Communist China,[9] radio stations on the regional and provincial levels were used primarily to announce decrees and regulations and to broadcast news of the region or province concerned. The main task of municipal stations was to conduct "social education," essentially a form of propaganda and agitation. These stations did not originate news programs of a national or international nature; they merely transmit such programs emanated from the Central People's Broadcasting Station in Peking.

Administratively, the regional broadcasting station took orders from the Radiobroadcasting Bureau of the Central People's Government, whereas provincial and municipal stations were under the dual supervision of the Central Radiobroadcasting Bureau and the regional station. Their daily activities were controlled by the Party and government agencies on corresponding levels.

No information has been given by the Chinese Communists on the new designation of the regional station after the abolishment of the regional administration. It is possible that this station has been relegated to a provincial status to serve Hupei Province.

Radio Facilities As of June 1951, there were

9. Mei I, "Wo-kuo Jen-min Kuang-po Shih-yeh Kai-k'uang," ["General Survey of the People's Radiobroadcasting in China"], ibid., April 25, 1950.

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approximately 100,000 radio receiving sets in Central-South China. An overwhelming majority were concentrated in a few large cities. Radio receiving sets in Canton, Swatow, and Chiang-men, all in Kwangtung Province, accounted for two-thirds of the total number.[10] While about 20 per cent of these radio receiving sets were used "collectively" by listeners in groups, the remainder were owned by individual citizens or commercial firms.

Since June 1951, the Communists in Central-South China have increased the number of radio receiving sets in the region. But such an increase must have been slight, since there is a shortage of radio parts and technicians.

Radio Broadcast Monitors The limited number of radio stations and receiving sets, however, is not an accurate indication of the effectiveness of the radio as a medium of propaganda and public information. Any measurement of such effectiveness must take into account the "broadcast monitors" operating in government offices and units of the armed forces, and in public gathering places such as factories and schools. Some of these monitors are appointed; others are voluntary workers.[11] All

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10. "Chung-nan Ch'ü Jen-min Kuang-po Shih-yeh Kai-k'uang" ["General Survey of the People's Radio-broadcasting in Central-South China"], Chung-nan Kuang-po [Central-South Broadcasting Journal], Vol II, No. 2, June 1, 1951, p. 5.

11. See "Shou-yin-yüan T'iao-li" ["Regulations on the Work of Monitors"], People's Daily, April 30 1950. When the monitors work in teams, their teams are called "monitoring stations." As of June 1951,

(continued next page)

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are utilized to cope with the problems caused by the shortage of radio reception facilities. The Communists hope that, by appointing monitors they may make the most effective use of the limited number of radio-receiving sets available. The monitors jot down broadcasts, transcribe and mimeograph them, or rewrite them in the form of "wall newspapers," thus making it possible for the material to reach a larger audience.

The fact that monitors can help increase the effectiveness of radio is enhanced by the two provisions contained in the "Regulations on the Work of Monitors" promulgated on April 29, 1950, by the Central People's Radiobroadcasting Station.[12] One of the provisions requires the monitors to concentrate on receiving programs such as speeches made by the government leaders, social science lectures, government decrees, news reports, and other items which might help to mold the political and cultural attitudes of the listener. The second provision is that the monitors must report to the responsible radio station their reception work and the reactions of their fellow listeners, so that the station can check on their work as monitors and readjust its programs, if necessary, in the light of the reactions of the audience.

Radio-Diffusion Exchanges In connection with broadcast reception, brief mention should be

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11. (continued) there were 536 such stations in Central-South China. Almost every county government had one station.

12. See Article 2, ibid.

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made of the radio-diffusion exchange. Radio diffusion is a device for disseminating broadcasts by means of a network of speakers attached to a single reception set. Each net is called a radio-diffusion exchange. The use of radio-diffusion exchanges has proved of special value in Kwangtung Province. As of June 1955, there were 213 such exchanges, 70 operating in towns and cities and 143 in factories, mines, and business offices.[13] There are at least two major advantages gained by the use of such a device. First, it enables the Communists to use a minimum number of receition sets to reach a maximum number of radio listeners. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the wired network of the radio-diffusion exchange has a greater adaptability to propaganda control. Since the radio-diffusion exchange selects the programs to be relayed by scattered speakers, it is easy to rule out any possibility of intrusion of enemy radio propaganda. In view of the proximity of Kwangtung Province to Hong Kong and the free world, the use of the radio-diffusion exchange by the Communists in that province is quite understandable.

The Stage as a Propaganda Medium The Communists recognize the traditional Chinese drama as "an effective instrument for educating the masses with revolutionary spirit and patriotism."[14] Committees have been formed and charged with the

13. Hua-ch'iao Jih-pao [China Daily News], New York, June 2, 1955.

14. People's Daily, December 17, 1950.